



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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May 13, 2013
FB13-040

NOAA Fisheries Announces New Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish *Small Entity Compliance Guide*

On May 9, 2013, NOAA Fisheries approved Amendment 37 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico. This rule adjusts the commercial and recreational annual catch limits and annual catch targets, establishes a 12-fish commercial trip limit and a 2-fish recreational daily bag limit, establishes an annual fishing season closure from June 1 through July 31 for the commercial and recreational sectors, and establishes an overage adjustment for the recreational sector. A final rule implementing these regulations published in the *Federal Register* on May 9, 2013 (78 FR 27088). The commercial and recreational annual catch limits, annual catch targets, and in-season recreational closure authority are effective immediately. **The commercial trip limit, recreational bag limit, and annual seasonal closure for commercial and recreational sectors become effective on June 10, 2013.**

Purpose of the Amendment 37

Gray triggerfish is overfished (population abundance is too low) and undergoing overfishing (rate of removal too high). The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires that overfished stocks be rebuilt and that overfishing be halted. Therefore, the primary purpose of Amendment 37 is to end overfishing of gray triggerfish and allow the stock to rebuild to healthy levels.

Annual Catch Limits and Annual Catch Targets

The commercial allocation is 21 percent and the recreational allocation is 79 percent of the annual catch limit. Until a future stock assessment is completed or the annual catch limit is exceeded, the commercial annual catch limit and annual catch target will be 64,100 pounds and 60,900 pounds, respectively. The recreational annual catch limit and annual catch target will be 241,200 pounds and 217,100 pounds, respectively.

Commercial Management Measures

This rule establishes a commercial sector trip limit of 12-fish throughout the fishing year, and a seasonal closure to the harvest of gray triggerfish from June 1 through July 31. Implementing a trip limit and closed season is expected to allow a longer fishing season for the commercial sector.

Recreational Management Measures

This rule establishes a recreational daily bag limit of 2 fish per angler within the 20-fish reef fish aggregate bag limit, and establishes a seasonal closure to the harvest of gray triggerfish from June 1 through July 31. Implementing a trip limit and closed season is expected to allow a longer fishing season for the recreational sector.

Recreational Accountability Measures

The rule replaces the current post-season accountability measure with an in-season closure authority based on the recreational annual catch target and establishes an overage adjustment to reduce the gray triggerfish annual catch limit and annual catch target by the amount of the overage. This overage adjustment would apply if gray triggerfish is overfished.

Electronic copies of the amendment and final rule may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries [Web site](#). For more information on Amendment 37 and the gray triggerfish rebuilding plan, please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).